

BEFORE THE PERSONNEL APPEALS BOARD

STATE OF WASHINGTON

RONALD GUM,

Appellant,

v.

EASTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY,

Respondent.

Case No. ALLO-02-0018

ORDER OF THE BOARD FOLLOWING
HEARING ON EXCEPTIONS TO THE
DETERMINATION OF THE DIRECTOR

Hearing on Exceptions. This appeal came on for hearing before the Personnel Appeals Board, WALTER T. HUBBARD, Chair, on Appellant's exceptions to the director's determination dated May 20, 2002. The hearing was held at the Office of the Attorney General in Spokane, Washington, on March 27, 2003. GERALD L. MORGEN, Vice Chair, listened to the recorded proceedings, reviewed the file and exhibits, and participated in the decision in this matter.

Appearances. Appellant Ronald Gum was present and appeared *pro se*. Respondent Eastern Washington University was represented by Jolynn Rogers, Director of Human Resources, and Linda Matthias, Director of Client Services.

Background. The Washington State Department of Personnel adopted revisions to the Information Technology class specifications. Appellant submitted a position questionnaire dated October 5, 2001. Jolynn Rogers, Director of Human Resources, conducted a review of Appellant's

1 position. By letter dated November 29, 2001, Ms. Rogers informed Appellant that his position was
2 being reallocated from Computer Maintenance Technician 3 to Information Technology Systems
3 Specialist 4 (ITSS4) effective January 1, 2002.

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5 Appellant requested that Eastern Washington University re-evaluate the allocation decision.
6 Appellant asked that his position be reallocated to the Information Technology Systems Specialist 5
7 (ITSS5) classification. By letter dated December 28, 2001, Ms. Rogers informed Appellant that his
8 position was properly allocated as an ITSS4.

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10 By letter dated January 22, 2002, Appellant filed a request for review to the Director of the
11 Department of Personnel. The director's designee, Kris Brophy, conducted an allocation review of
12 Appellant's position. By letter dated May 20, 2002, Mr. Brophy determined that Appellant's
13 position was properly allocated to the ITSS4 classification.

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15 On June 21, 2002, Appellant filed exceptions to the director's determination with the Personnel
16 Appeals Board.

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18 Appellant's position is located at the Eastern Washington University's Client Services Department
19 within the Information Resources Division. The Client Services Department is responsible for
20 providing desktop operating systems and associated software support to users across the campus.
21 Appellant's responsibilities include installing, maintaining, troubleshooting, consulting, and
22 resolving problems for Eastern Washington University's desktop operating systems and associated
23 software systems.

1 **Summary of Appellant's Argument.** Appellant disagrees with the determination that his position
2 is properly allocated to the ITSS4 classification. Appellant argues that his supervisor, Linda
3 Matthias, supports the reclassification of his position to the higher level. Appellant asserts that he
4 performs duties at the enterprise level, and that the majority of the duties and the services he
5 provides are at an expert level and impact the total organization. Appellant contends that he
6 independently provides comprehensive expert-level desktop computer support to the entire Eastern
7 Washington University campus enterprise including hardware and software support. Appellant
8 asserts that his position should be reallocated to the ITSS5 classification.

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10 **Summary of Respondent's Argument.** Respondent asserts that Appellant's supervisor, Linda
11 Matthias, was in favor of his position being allocated at the higher level when his position
12 questionnaire was completed on October 5, 2001. However, Respondent contends that the Human
13 Resource Unit reviewed the position questionnaire and determined that Appellant's duties, as a
14 whole, fall within the scope and level of responsibility of the lower level. Respondent contends that
15 Ms. Matthias has since concurred with the Human Resource Unit's evaluation of Appellant's
16 position. Respondent argues that Appellant does not have primary responsibility for designing
17 enterprise level systems crossing divisional lines with multiple environments. Respondent asserts
18 that Appellant's position, therefore, is correctly allocated to the ITSS4 class.

19
20 **Primary Issue.** Whether the director's determination that Appellant's position is properly allocated
21 to the Information Technology Systems Specialist 4 classification should be affirmed.

22
23 **Relevant Classifications.** Information Technology Systems Specialist 4, Class Code 2408;
24 Information Technology Systems Specialist 5, Class Code 2409.

1 **Decision of the Board.** The purpose of a position review is to determine which classification best
2 describes the overall duties and responsibilities of a position. A position review is neither a
3 measurement of the volume of work performed, nor an evaluation of the expertise with which that
4 work is performed. Also, a position review is not a comparison of work performed by employees in
5 similar positions. A position review is a comparison of the duties and responsibilities of a particular
6 position to the available classification specifications. This review results in a determination of the
7 class which best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of the position. Liddle-Stamper v.
8 Washington State University, PAB Case No. 3722-A2 (1994).

9
10 Because a current and accurate description of a position's duties and responsibilities is documented
11 in an approved classification questionnaire, the classification questionnaire becomes the basis for
12 allocation of a position. An allocation determination must be based on the overall duties and
13 responsibilities as documented in the classification questionnaire. Lawrence v. Dept of Social and
14 Health Services, PAB No. ALLO-99-0027 (2000).

15
16 For a position to be allocated to the ITSS5 class, incumbents are expected to have broad discretion
17 and authority as expert-level specialists. According to the Distinguishing Characteristics,
18 incumbents must spend a majority of time performing:

19
20 Under administrative direction, evaluate and resolve large-scale, high-risk, high-impact or
21 mission-critical computing system, application, telecommunication, project, or operational
22 needs. As an expert-level specialist, perform highly-complex tasks such as designing large-
23 scale or enterprise systems crossing multiple networks, platforms or telecommunication
24 environments; developing project plans; directing large-scale, enterprise, or mission-critical
25 projects which align with organizational policy; identifying and resolving operational
26 problems for systems; conducting capacity planning to determine institution-wide needs and
making recommendations; developing comprehensive instructional technology support
strategies; and writing feasibility studies and decision packages for high visibility/impact
initiatives.

Appellant asserts that he meets the definition of the ITSS5 because he provides independent expert consultation with “enterprise-wide impact” including:

- Consulting with other staff to integrate new technology institution-wide and carry out institution-wide information technology functions.
- Participating as a member of work groups that analyze and access industry direction and trends, and analyze new capabilities that may be applied to the institution.
- Making recommendations to executives concerning improvements in efficiencies in systems performance.
- Participating in enterprise-wide projects.
- Maintaining 62 web pages that have enterprise-wide impact.

The record supports the decision by the director’s designee that Appellant performs some senior-level information technology systems support for the Client Services Department. Appellant’s position questionnaire and exhibits support that:

- Appellant does not have primary responsibility for designing enterprise-level systems crossing divisional lines with multiple networks, platforms, or telecommunication environments.
- Appellant does not have primary responsibility for developing project plans and directing such large-scale projects because his level of responsibility for projects is limited to issues affecting the Client Services Department.
- Appellant does not retain authority for the projects he participates in at the level expected within the scope of the ITSS5 classification.
- Appellant is not responsible for capacity planning to determine institution-wide needs. Rather, Appellant participates in the development of feasibility studies and makes technical recommendations to administration on certain campus-wide initiatives. Further, this responsibility encompasses a minor portion of his time.
- Appellant’s supervisor is responsible for ensuring that projects and functions align with organizational policies within Client Services. Appellant is expected to carry out the

majority of his work in accordance with the policies and objectives his supervisor has established.

Appellant has not met his burden of proving that his position provides independent expert consultation with enterprise-wide impact or that the duties of his position are at the Information Technology Systems Specialist 5 level.

Therefore, we support the decision by the director's designee that Appellant's position does not meet the definition or distinguishing characteristics required for the Information Technology Systems Specialist 5 job classification.

According to the Distinguishing Characteristics for the ITSS4 classification, incumbents:

Under administrative direction, independently evaluate and resolve complex computing system, application, telecommunication, project, or operational needs in an assigned area of responsibility. As a senior-level specialist apply advanced technical knowledge to perform complex tasks such as serving as a team or project leader; planning and directing complex projects; supervising lower-level staff; conducting capacity planning and making recommendations; designing multiple-server systems; designing specialized interfaces; designing and providing instructional technology support; managing multi-server systems; developing and implementing quality assurance testing and performance monitoring; acting as a liaison on the development of client/server applications; representing institution-wide computing and/or telecommunication standards and philosophy at meetings; or developing security policies and standards. The majority of tasks performed have division-wide or multiple-functional area impact, may integrate new technology, and/or change how the mission is accomplished.

After reviewing the duties and responsibilities described in Appellant's position questionnaire, we conclude that Appellant's position best fits the definition and distinguishing characteristics of the Information Technology Systems Specialist 4 classification. Further, we agree with the director's designee that Appellant's position "is consistent with the Basic Function, Distinguishing Characteristics, and Typical Work statements for this class."

1 **Conclusion.** Appellant's position is best described by the Information Technology Systems
2 Specialist 4 classification. Appellant's appeal on exceptions should be denied and the Director's
3 determination dated May 20, 2002, should be affirmed.

4
5 **ORDER**

6 NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the appeal of Ronald Gum is denied and the
7 Director's determination dated May 20, 2002, is affirmed. A copy is attached.

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9 DATED this _____ day of _____, 2003.

10 WASHINGTON STATE PERSONNEL APPEALS BOARD

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12 _____
Walter T. Hubbard, Chair

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Gerald L. Morgen, Vice Chair